

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PARIS 09616 161229Z

46

ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8553

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 09616

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SREF, CB

SUBJECT: CARE, MAINTENANCE, AND ONWARD TRAVEL CHENG
HENG AND FAMILY

REF: (A) STATE 086504 EXDIS (B) STATE 084084 EXDIS

1. EMBASSY HAS BEEN IN FREQUENT CONTACT WITH CHENG
HENG SINCE HIS ARRIVAL IN PARIS. FOLLOWING CABLE
WAS PREPARED PRIOR TO RECEIPT OF REF A.

2. WITH CHENG HENG IN FRANCE ARE ONE MARRIED DAUGHTER
(WIFE OF DUONG SORET) AND HER YOUNG SON, TWO DAUGHTERS
AND THREE SONS WHO HAVE BEEN IN SCHOOL IN FRANCE. IN
THE U.S. HE HAS ONE SON WORKING FOR HIS MA AT UNIVERSITY
IN INDIANA AND A DAUGHTER MARRIED TO THE COMMERCIAL
ATTACHE IN THE GKR EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON. CHENG HENG
WISHES POLITICAL ASYLUM IN THE UNITED STATES FOR HIM-
SELF, ALL OF THE ABOVE RELATIVES, DUONG SORETH, AND
ANOTHER DAUGHTER AND HER HUSBAND WHO ARE STILL IN PHNOM
PENH. HE WISHES THE UNITED STATES TO PROVIDE FOR HIM
IN SOME SOUTHERN STATE SUFFICIENT PROPERTY FOR HIM TO
EXERCISE HIS PROFESSION AS A "PLANTER".

3. IN ADDITION TO A LONG TERM REQUEST FOR POLITICAL
ASYLUM WITH ADEQUATE FUNDS TO CARE FOR A LARGE FAMILY
AND MAINTAIN A STANDARD OF LIVING SUITABLE FOR A FORMER
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PAGE 02 PARIS 09616 161229Z

CHIEF OF STATE, CHENG HENG HAS REQUESTED INTERIM

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE HERE IN PARIS WHILE AWAITING USG DECISION CONCERNING HIS LONG TERM REQUEST. ACCORDING TO CHENG HENG HE DEPARTED WITH VERY LITTLE MONEY BECAUSE HE HAD ANTICIPATED THAT HIS DEPARTURE AND THAT OF LON NOL WOULD PRECIPITATE NEGOTIATIONS PROVIDING A PERIOD DURING WHICH HE COULD EXPECT TO CONTINUE TO RECEIVE FUNDS FROM HIS PROPERTY IN CAMBODIA. HE IS NOW OF THE OPINION THAT NOT ONLY WILL HIS PLANTATION BE SEIZED BY THE COMMUNISTS BUT THAT ANY OTHER FUNDS WILL NOT BE FORWARDED TO HIM IN FRANCE. CHENG HENG AFFIRMED THAT HE HAD NOT ESTABLISHED SUBSTANTIAL BANK ACCOUNTS OUTSIDE CAMBODIA AS HAD MARSHAL LON NOL AND HIS FAMILY. HE REMARKED THAT AS A POLITICAL FIGURE WHO HAD GENERALLY FOLLOWED U.S. REQUESTS SINCE 1970, HE COULD NOT EXPECT ANY ASSISTANCE FROM THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT. HE WILL HAVE A LAWSUIT CONCERNING HIS INABILITY TO FULFILL A CONTRACT TO PURCHASE A MODEST APARTMENT IN FRANCE, BUT BELIEVES HIS LAWYERS WILL BE ABLE TO EXTRICATE HIM FROM THE AFFAIR, ARGUING FORCE MAJEURE. CHENG HENG IS CURRENTLY LIVING VERY MODESTLY IN A SMALL HOTEL IN AN UNFASHIONABLE QUARTER.

4. IN VIEW OF CHENG HENG'S FORMER POSITION OF CHIEF OF STATE AND THE CLOSE AND COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIP HE HAS MAINTAINED WITH THE U.S., WE RECOMMEND THAT RAPID CONSIDERATION BE GIVEN TO POSSIBLE SHORT TERM FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE. IF AND WHEN IT IS DETERMINED THAT SUCH A SPECIAL ASSISTANCE MAY BE PROVIDED TO HIM, WE WILL ATTEMPT TO ASCERTAIN THE MAGNITUDE OF HIS NEEDS. AS CAUTIONED BY REF B, WE HAVE NOT PROMISED ANY FUNDS. WE BELIEVE AN ARGUMENT CAN BE MADE FOR FORWARDING FUNDS TO CHENG HENG THROUGH THE EMBASSY HERE EVEN THOUGH IN THE CASE OF OTHERS WE MAY WISH TO WORK THROUGH LOCAL VOLUNTARY AGENCIES.

5. WE BELIEVE THAT SPECIAL CONSIDERATION ALSO SHOULD BE GIVEN TO CHENG HENG'S REQUEST FOR POLITICAL ASYLUM. STONE

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